

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 7393

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, AU

SUBJECT: SOCIALIST PARTY CONFRONTS CARINTHIAN LEADERSHIP
STRUGGLE

REF: VIENNA 4223

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. SUMMARY: AT SEPTEMBER 6 MEETING OF SOCIALIST PARTY
(SPOE) EXECUTIVE BOARD, CHANCELLOR KREISKY WAS AUTHORIZED
TO ATTEMPT PERSUADE CARINTHIAN GOVERNOR HANS SIMA TO
RESIGN AND APPROVED KRESKY'S CHOICE OF ERWIN LANC TO SUCCEED
ERWIN FREUHBauer AS TRANSPORTATION MINISTER. END SUMMARY
END UNCLASSIFIED

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2. EFFORTS TO REMOVE SIMA FROM GOVERNORSHIP BEGAN LAST
MAY WHEN HE LOST CARINTHIAN SPOE CHAIRMANSHP TO LEPOLD
WAGNER AS RESULT OF WANING CONFIDENCE IN HIM AS REFLECTED
IN MISJUDGING DEEP-SEATED ANIMOSITY TO BILINGUAL ROADSIGN
ISSUE AND SOCIALIST LOSSES IN MARCH PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS
(SEE REFTEL). REPEATED ATTEMPTS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER TO
PERSUADE SIMA TO RESIGN CAME TO NAUGHT DESPITE OFFERS OF
LUCRATIVE POSITIONS, SUCH AS CONSUL GENERAL IN
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LJUBLJANA AND PRESIDENT OF CARINTHIAN ELECTRIC POWER

COMPANY. WHEN PROVINCIAL PARTY CHAIRMAN WAGNER GAVE SIMA ULTIMATUM ON SEPTEMBER 3 TO RESIGN BY OCTOBER 1 AND SIMA PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED HIS REFUSAL, EMBARRASSMENT IN SPOE CIRCLES BECAME SO ACUTE THAT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WAS ASKED TO INTERVENE. THUS, KREISKY IN CAPACITY OF PARTY CHAIRMAN, WILL ATTEMPT TO PERUADE SIMA TO RELINQUISH THE GOVERNORSHIP FOR SAKE OF PARTY UNITY AND PRESTIGE. DESPITE POLITICAL AGONY CONFRONTING KRESIDKY WHO WON SPOE CHAIRMANSHIP FROM PITTERMANN IN 1966 WITH SIMA'S CRUCIAL SUPPORT, WE ANTICIPATE THAT HE SHALL SUCCEED WHERE CARINTHIANS FAILED. EARLY SOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP CRISIS IS IMPERATIVE BECAUSE OF LATENT SLOVENE MINORITY PROBLEM WHICH COULD FLARE UP AGAIN AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN 1975.

3. NOMINATION OF MP LANE (IVP GRANTEE MARCH 1971)
AS SUCCESSOR TO TRANSPORT MINISTER FRUEHBAUER IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO "SIMA AFFAIR" BECAUSE CARINTHIAN SPOE WAS IN SUCH DISARRAY THAT FRUEHBAUER WAS ASKED TO RETURN THERE TO ASSUME DEPUTY GOVERNORSHIP ONCE WAGNER REPLACES SIMA.

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